

Testimony at the March 10, 2011 meeting re: BS 1001, Reorganization of Higher Education

My name is Sue (Susan A.) Holt, I am a registered voter in Connecticut.

I am a professor in the Psychology Department of Central Connecticut State University, a campus representative to AAUP, and volunteer as a program planning and evaluation consultant to several community organizations.

I agree with the Governor's statements regarding more funding for instruction in higher education, support for academic missions, and the desire to save money. With respect to this reorganization, I do not believe it is clear where, how and how much money will be saved.

Before any reorganization should be considered, it is absolutely essential to create a strategic plan. The central goal of any plan is to improve student education. Any reorganization that threatens the integrity of the education offered at present should be rejected.

The strategic plan should:

- Keep intact the separate institutional identities and missions – like our state population, it is the diversity of our state higher educational institutions that is its strength.

- Receive input from each institution's students, faculty and administrators.

- Consider the pros and cons of various reorganization models, not just one

- Question seriously the savings of the Minnesota plan.

- Allow enough to study comprehensively the implications of any reorganization to determine if, in fact, reorganization makes academic sense. Don't rush the process. It is important to do this right if we do it at all. This is a massive reorganization.

- Reconsider using graduation or retention rates as criteria for academic achievement – these have been tried, failed and abandoned by other states.

- Appreciate the complexities of the students who struggle to balance their work, families and school responsibilities, who switch of necessity between full and part time status, who change majors, who are unprepared by reason of attitude or skills to do well at the university level.

- Consider the breath of understanding the current governing boards possess in dealing with the missions of the state university system and the community college system and negotiating well with both systems. This would be sacrificed in the proposed reorganization.

- Recognize that workforce preparation does not mean preparation for a specific job. Most of my students' parents have had several types of employment. A Connecticut job today may evaporate tomorrow.

  - We teach students to think critically, reason analytically and integratively, write, and speak well.

  - We teach students to be flexible, adapt and thrive in employment opportunities available now, and be prepared for those yet to be invented.

- Realize the proposed Board of Regents is far removed from the colleges, has authority that is too concentrated over the budget and too encompassing over position control and amend this.

I urge you to vote against the reorganization bill.